



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Glenwood Springs Field Office
Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81602



RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING #9

Wednesday, March 11, 2009 (6:00 PM – 9:00 PM)

Meeting Location: BLM Energy Office
2425 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs, CO

SUMMARY NOTES

Attendees: Chris Beebe (Red Hill Council), Steve Dahmer (wildlife/recreation – hunting), Michael Kennedy (Roaring Fork Climbers Coalition), Ken Neubecker (Trout Unlimited), Steve Smith (The Wilderness Society), Tom Turnbull (livestock grazing), Greg Noss (High Country 4-Wheelers), Donna Gray (Williams Production), Steve Bennett (BLM GSFO), Brian Hopkins (BLM GSFO), John Russell (BLM GSFO), Chad Ricklefs (Tetra Tech), Neil Lynn (Tetra Tech)

Handouts:

- Agenda
- “Working Draft, Wilderness Characteristics Assessment for the Glenwood Springs Field Office” – March 11, 2009
- “Management and Setting Prescriptions for Areas with Wilderness Characteristics” Working Draft – March 9, 2009
- “The Wild and Scenic River Study Process”
- “Visual Resources” – Public Scoping Meetings, April 10-12, 2007
- “Addendum: Revisions to the ACEC Report” – October 2, 2008
- “Glenwood Springs Field Office Recreation Appendix Working Draft” – March 6, 2009
- “Examples of Management Actions, Allowable Uses and Implementation Actions to Achieve Desired Recreation Setting Character Conditions” – March 6, 2009

WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS

- Tom Turnbull (RAC Subgroup) welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked them for attending. This was followed by a round robin of introductions. Donna Gray was introduced as being the new RAC Subgroup member. The agenda for this meeting was handed out. Chad Ricklefs (Tetra Tech) asked if there were any questions on the agenda or from the last meeting. None were voiced.

POINTS OF CONTACT

- John Russell (BLM GSFO) mentioned that any updated POC information would be helpful and appreciated. Information should be sent to him so he can update the files.
- Steve Bennett (BLM GSFO) mentioned that there were two new member of the RAC Subgroup; Clare Bastable (Northwest Resource Advisory Group) and Glenn Vawter (Northwest Resource Advisory Group).

RMP PLANNING PROCESS AND SCHEDULE UPDATE

Chad Ricklefs stated that the RMP schedule has not changed since it was presented last month. GSFO received Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 in late February for Field Office Internal review. GSFO review will be completed on March 13.

RMP/EIS Schedule

- Field Office review of the full preliminary Draft RMP/EIS: May 2009.
- State Office review of the full preliminary Draft RMP/EIS: July 2009
- Washington Office Review of full preliminary Draft RMP/EIS: August 2009.
- Public Draft RMP/EIS is expected to be issued in fall 2009. There will be a 90-day public comment review period.
- After 90-day public comment period closes on Draft RMP/EIS, then BLM considers public comments and develops the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, which is a combination of any of the four alternatives that are considered in the Draft RMP/EIS. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is not limited to being the same as the BLM's preferred alternative that is identified in the Draft RMP/EIS. After the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is published, there is a 30-day protest period. After that, the BLM Washington Office will resolve protests and the Record of Decision will be signed approving the Approved RMP.
- Regarding the additional air quality modeling – BLM is watching the repercussions on those tasks. Currently there is no change to the schedule from the air quality monitoring.
- There were no questions on the schedule or planning process.

GSFO RAC Subgroup Meetings Schedule

- April 15, 2009 meeting has been rescheduled to April 29, 2009. Comments on the supporting documents/appendices handed out at this meeting will be discussed. Complete agenda to be determined.
- May 13, 2009 meeting. Provide overview of selecting the preferred alternative. Complete agenda to be determined.

DISCUSSION ON “AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT” AND “ALTERNATIVES” COMMENTS

- None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS/APPENDICES DISCUSSIONS WITH GSFO STAFF

- Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics – Kay Hopkins (BLM GSFO)
 - Handed out “Management and Setting Prescriptions for Areas with Wilderness Characteristics” Working Draft.
 - Handed out “Working Draft, Wilderness Characteristics Assessment for the Glenwood Springs Field Office”.
 - In the early 1980's the BLM did an inventory on Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). Under Land Use Planning and Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), these areas must be updated. GSFO has six units of lands outside of the existing WSAs. The assessment determines what values these areas have (see page 4 of handout).
 - The assessment captures the changes in these areas from the 1970's/1980's and now. The assessment contains information on the current management/status of the areas.
 - Alternative C considers all six units as managed to maintain the characteristics of the areas.
 - Grandfathered uses and valid and existing rights are allowed.
 - Castle Peak – Managed as a non-motorized area for over 10 years. Managed for hunting and other non-motorized opportunities. Allowed for a couple of key access points. Only travel allowed is in the northern portion for maintenance of livestock developments (not open to the public).
 - Deep Creek – BLM has been managing area as an ACEC and SRMA. BLM is also looking at the area in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Report. In 2002, the White River National Forest (WRNF) designated the area around Deep Creek as suitable for Wild and Scenic Rivers

and manages the area for its wilderness characteristics. Deep Creek has routes in the northern portion from an adjacent ranch (livestock maintenance routes).

- Flat Tops/Hack Lake – Managed as SRMA for over 20 years. Used heavily during hunting season/horseback riding. Managed for primitive recreation uses and for naturalness. Adjacent US Forest Service lands have wilderness characteristics as well and are managed for them.
 - Grand Hogback – Area has 15 existing oil and gas leases, but nothing has yet to occur on those leases. Routes in the area are old, lightly used, and mostly reclaimed.
 - For areas with wilderness characteristics, solitude does not have to be found throughout entire area but just present in some portion. Naturalness should be present throughout.
 - Pisgah Mountain – Managed for limited motorized used since 1997. Heavily used for hunting. Good opportunities for solitude. Old Stagecoach Road has been maintained and has been cherry stemmed. Other boundary adjustments were made as well to manage for naturalness and existing roads.
 - Thompson Creek – Has wilderness characteristics. Has been managed for a natural area, also an ACEC. More difficult to manage for wilderness characteristics since there is a lot of interest in the area. Adjacent US Forest Service lands have wilderness characteristics and are managed for them. The routes in the north of the area do allow for motorized use but there are not many users.
 - Management and Setting prescriptions document tells how the six areas will be managed under Alternative C; see handout.
 - RAC Subgroup question: Is the existing helicopter use by the National Guard in Deep Creek described in the assessment? Kay Hopkins: Yes, this use is mentioned. As these impacts are not permanent, the area could still be managed for its wilderness characteristics. These impacts are considered and accounted for in the assessment. RAC Subgroup comment: Landing of the helicopters is more of an issue than the low flights. These landings may ultimately preclude this area from being designating as wilderness.
 - Primitive and unconfined recreation definition – recreating in an untrammled area; cross-country, off-trail type of recreation.
 - RAC Subgroup question: Wilderness characteristics lands are only included in one Alternative. These six areas should be included in all three action alternatives. At least these six areas should be included in Alternative B or be clear that a positive vote for Alternative B is not a vote against wilderness. Kay Hopkins: Even if these areas are not managed specifically for wilderness characteristics, they will still have other protections under other action alternatives that will protect the wilderness characteristics, e.g. these areas may be ACECs, have NSOs for wildlife, etc.
 - RAC Subgroup comment: It appears that unless you are on foot or on horse, you can't enjoy the wilderness qualities these areas have. Need to get the 4-wheelers and mountain bikers behind the wilderness idea and make it more accessible to them and not tell them they can't use the areas. RAC Subgroup response: Agree there is a need to get more people to enjoy these areas, but must also protect some of the values of these areas. There is some need to remain free of some uses. John Russell: This process is intended so we can get the best available information so we can make the most informed decision possible. We need to look at these areas individually to make sure we have the best info to make the best decision.
 - RAC Subgroup comment: Some 4-wheelers use their vehicles to travel to trailheads. Also, some 4-wheelers are used by older people to give them access to these areas. Without access they may not be able to enjoy them.
 - Kay Hopkins encouraged the RAC Subgroup to provide comments or contact her if they have any questions or need additional information.
- Wild and Scenic River Segments – Kay Hopkins (BLM GSFO)

- Handed out “The Wild and Scenic River Study Process”.
- There are two phases of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: Eligibility and Suitability. Eligibility phase is more like an inventory that lists the Outstanding Recreational Values (ORVs). A 2007 Wild and Scenic River eligibility study was conducted for the GSFO. This study looked at every perennial stream and river in the field office. To be eligible, the stream must be free flowing and have an ORV. The study found that the GSFO has 26 eligible segments. The eligibility report is on the RMP/EIS website (<http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo/>). The Suitability phase is meant to be a full public process and allows everybody a chance to participate. The Suitability phase looks at how designation would affect other uses as well as looking to see if designation is the best way to protect the segment. Only Congress can designate a Wild and Scenic River.
- Alternative A would manage all 26 eligible streams as eligible. BLM would continue to manage these streams for their eligibility. Alternative B1 would manage two segments of the Colorado River and two segments of Deep Creek as suitable. Alternative C will manage all 26 segments as suitable. Alternative D would manage none of the segments as suitable.
- The White River National Forest is teaming with the GSFO on the wild and scenic river process because four of their segments (two Colorado River segments and two Deep Creek segments) are contiguous with the BLM's.
- The draft suitability report will be released with the Draft RMP/EIS, or earlier if the EIS is delayed. The public will be allowed a chance to comment on the draft suitability report.
- Kay Hopkins encouraged the RAC Subgroup to provide comments or contact her if they have any questions or need additional information.
- Visual Resources – Kay Hopkins (BLM GSFO)
 - Handed out “Visual Resources”. No questions were asked regarding visual resource management.
- Outdoor Recreation – Brian Hopkins (BLM GSFO)
 - Handed out “Glenwood Springs Field Office Recreation Appendix Working Draft”.
 - SRMA – Special Recreation Management Area; ERMA - Extensive Recreation Management Area.
 - The revised Land Use Planning Handbook provided direction for providing a quality recreation experience for the users. BLM is currently revising guidance for recreation management.
 - Part of the RMP/EIS process for GSFO is to determine how to manage recreation. Either as SRMAs or ERMAs.
 - SRMAs will provide specific recreation opportunities. Will emphasize certain recreational outcomes or experiences. SRMAs also need to have a commitment for the long-term.
 - A visitor survey was conducted to determine what type of experiences visitors to GSFO were having. This survey is available on the RMP/EIS website (<http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo/>).
 - ERMAs are not necessarily dispersed recreation. These areas offer a variety of opportunities and outcomes. The key difference between ERMAs and SRMAs is that ERMAs are managed on an interdisciplinary basis. Multiple disciplines are represented with an ERMA instead of the primary recreation type within SRMAs.
 - The recreation appendix (see handout) lists the general resource wide objectives and a summary of the SRMAs and ERMAs changes. Previously, everything that wasn't an SRMA was one ERMA. Now, there are several distinct ERMAs as well as an overall Glenwood Springs ERMA.
 - The SRMA and ERMA designations are not tied to funding.
 - The recreation appendix (see handout) also contains specific information for all SRMAs: Objectives for the SRMA, proposed recreation setting conditions, and management actions for

the area. The ERMA section of the appendix contains similar information as the SRMA section. The Glenwood Springs ERMA section contains the management for the rest of the GSFO.

- Brian Hopkins handed out “Examples of Management Actions, Allowable Uses and Implementation Actions to Achieve Desired Recreation Setting Character Conditions”. All of the categories included in this handout can affect a user’s recreational experience.
 - Two key attributes for the setting of recreation: remoteness and naturalness. These attributes are the same across all zones. Chapter 4 of the RMP/EIS will discuss how the management actions will affect the remoteness and naturalness of these areas.
 - Different alternative may have the same SRMA/ERMA but with different recreation emphasis, i.e., mountain biking versus motorized use. Some of these differences are subtle. In other cases, one area may be an SRMA under one alternative and an ERMA under another alternative.
 - Brian Hopkins encouraged the RAC Subgroup to provide comments or contact him if they have any questions or need additional information.
 - Recreation management is just one layer to management of the GSFO. Other layers of management include Wild and Scenic Rivers, ACECs, etc. So if some areas are not captured in the recreation section they may be covered by another. May need to look at other sections of the RMP/EIS to determine what the management of a certain area would be.
 - RAC Subgroup comment: One concern is what the document will look like when it goes out for public review. Will they be able to follow the document? What should the public be interested in, an SRMA or an ERMA? Brian Hopkins: You need to first determine what is most important to you, then you can use that to determine how best to comment.
 - RAC Subgroup comment: A matrix that details all the management actions for any given area may be helpful to the readers. The table in the recreation appendix could have direction on where to find other information on that particular area. One of the tasks for reviewers is to make sure that there is a proper range of alternatives for the document in regards to recreation. Brian Hopkins: Chapter 4 and Table 2-2 in Chapter 2 will provide analysis of areas to help determine how the alternatives will affect specific areas of interest. We can consider adding “crosswalks” in the document to help guide readers to other sections of the RMP that deal with an area.
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
 - Handed out “Addendum: Revisions to the ACEC Report”. No discussion on Areas of Environmental Concern.

OTHER ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

- RAC Subgroup question: What are the “assignments” for the RAC Subgroup? John Russell: Things should proceed as they have until we get more direction from the Northwest RAC. The Northwest RAC may also want to see Subgroup’s comments on the RMP/EIS. Comments on the materials delivered tonight can be circulated among the RAC Subgroup. The minutes of the RAC Subgroup meetings should be given to the Northwest RAC so they can see what has occurred.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- None

NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday April 29, 2009
- Wednesday, May, 13, 2009

ACTION ITEMS

- **Brian Hopkins (BLM GSFO)** - Provide Donna Gray (Williams Production) a copy of the 1999 Oil and Gas SEIS

- ☐ **John Russell (BLM GSFO)** - Compile comments and BLM responses on Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, and distribute prior to April 29, 2009 meeting
- ☐ **John Russell (BLM GSFO)** – Distribute comment/response matrix for supporting documents/appendices provided at March 11, 2009 meeting
- ☐ **John Russell (BLM GSFO)** – Contact the Northwest RAC to ensure that a representative can be available to attend these meetings
- ☐ **John Russell (BLM GSFO)** – Send copy of meeting minutes to Northwest RAC
- ☐ **John Russell (BLM GSFO)** - Distribute agenda for April 29, 2009 meeting and March 11, 2009 meeting notes
- ☐ **RAC Subgroup Members** – Provide comments on the materials handed out at March 11, 2009 meeting and deliver to John Russell prior to April 29, 2009 meeting

NL – March 11, 2009